

# Graduate Student Association

**gsa**  
graduate student  
association

**Annual Report**

# 2023

*The Heart of Graduate Student Life*







**The heart  
of graduate  
student life**



# Strategic Plan

# 2019-2024

## OUR VISION

A unified and supported community that actively empowers graduate student excellence and experience.

## OUR MISSION

We contribute to the development of healthy, engaged graduate students who thrive during university & through their transition to work. We enable & build strong graduate student communities through:

- Proactive, responsible representation
- Purposeful & impactful services & support
- Strong partnerships within & beyond the University of Melbourne

## OUR VALUES

### Inspired by our fellow students, we will:

- Grow, learn and continuously improve.
- Engage collaboratively and inclusively.
- Be approachable and responsive.
- Promote a respectful and caring environment.
- Demonstrate accountability and honesty.
- Embrace friendship and fun.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

### Representation

We harness and create representational strength.

### Academic Support

We enrich academic excellence.

### Transition to Work

We facilitate positive post university outcomes.

### Engaged and Healthy Communities

We create GSA relevance and build healthy graduate student communities.

### Sustainability

We have a fit for purpose governance model, multi stakeholder influence and diversified funding for a sustainable future.

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Graduate Student Survey p.34



Galaxy Gala p.40

## Who is GSA

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the peak representative body for graduate students at the University of Melbourne. We are an independent association of 8 elected board members who are supported by elected representative and faculty council, as well as a small team of professional staff.

Find us at [gsa.unimelb.edu.au](https://gsa.unimelb.edu.au)



01

# Meet Our Graduate Leaders





# GSA President

**JESSE GARDNER-RUSSELL (HE/HIM)**



Jesse is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Eye Research Australia in the Melbourne Medical School Department of Ophthalmology. Jesse began his first term as Board President of GSA, studying a Master of Biotechnology, including areas of leadership, innovation, and organisational governance. Re-elected to his second term at the University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association President, Jesse has focussed on re-invigorating GSA's engagement and advocacy programs and expanding GSA's partnerships. Working with GSA and University Staff and Student Leaders, over the last 12 months Jesse has led the development of the GSA Graduate Ball, the GSA Summer Soiree, the MDHS PhD Peer-Learning Program, Werribee Campus Events, the new Graduate Group Funding Model, the Melbourne Student Forum, and the Graduate Student Survey.

At his core, Jesse is an advocate with a firm belief in consensus style and relational leadership. His guiding principle as GSA President is to listen and learn from student voices, including Grad Groups, GSA representatives, and most importantly, every-day graduate students. On the advocacy front, Jesse has been integral in the first indexation of PhD Travel Awards, a second record PhD Stipend Indexation, the COVID-19 Stipend Extension Campaign, the re-drafting of the Graduate Research and Training Policy, the Federal Government Action Plan to end gendered violence on campus, and a review into safety on placements at the University of Melbourne.

Having listened to graduate community concerns from our Graduate Student Survey, in 2024-25 Jesse is passionate about providing support for the rising cost of living, food insecurity and graduate student career outcomes. Jesse is committed to the sustainable governance of GSA, and has led not only the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer, but also the development of GSA's new strategic plan, improved staffing structures, representative training and financial transparency, fairer electoral regulations and Board delegations. Jesse has achieved all of this whilst reinforcing strong stakeholder relations with the University Chancellery, including GSA membership on the University Executive and Provost's Advisory Council as well as improved relationships with Faculties/Graduate Schools, such as MDHS, FFAM, and the Veterinary School.

Jesse has also been elected as the Board Chair of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, national peak body for all postgraduates, and is focused on lobbying the Federal Government on unfair changes to 485 Visas, and the Higher Education Future Fund which will negatively impact the career outcomes and course costs of our International Students, respectively.

# General Secretary

**YINGCHEN ZHAO (SHE/HER)**



Yingchen is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Information Systems from the Faculty of Engineering and IT, and also serves as the General Secretary at GSA. She is dedicated to leveraging her expertise in accounting and management to promote strong governance and compliance within the organisation. With a specific focus on compliance and accountability, Yingchen has worked diligently to ensure GSA operates efficiently, resulting in improved outcomes for student support, engagement, and advocacy.

Furthermore, Yingchen is committed to maintaining open lines of communication both internally and externally, including with the University Chancellery, student representatives, GSA employees, and external consultants. During this year, under Yingchen's leadership, GSA implemented several key initiatives to enhance its operations and effectiveness, such as optimising the operations of the elected Representative and Faculty Council, chairing the Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Subcommittee of the board, led the working group to review the Constitution, Electoral Regulations and Governance Charter, shape the Catalyst Program for graduate students to work casually at GSA.

In addition to her advocacy work for accessible learning, Yingchen has also taken an active role in addressing concerns raised by both the Representative Council and Faculty Council, by managing working groups that help amplifying these students' voices. Yingchen's unwavering commitment to these efforts will continue to benefit GSA and the students it serves.



# A Message from the GSA President

*For almost 30 years, GSA has been a dedicated independent voice for University of Melbourne graduate students, built on a dedicated community of graduate student leaders who work on behalf of their peers to make positive change.*

*The foundation of student representation at GSA has always been elected graduate students. Graduate students are the GSA, they set the strategic direction for the organisation, make key decisions on issues like funding allocation, GSA's campaign agenda and managing GSA's stakeholder relationships.*

*How elected graduate students at GSA utilise their position is paramount to preserving the independence, integrity and success of our organisation.*

*As the 27th GSA President, it has been my honour to serve the graduate students of the University of Melbourne for 2 years. Being GSA President is a dynamic role, that sometimes feels like a 24-hour, 7-days a week job. However, despite the challenges, the opportunity to serve the community is the privilege of a lifetime. As I look at the monumental work that the GSA team has achieved in the last 12 months, my term as President ends with GSA stronger than ever.*

## Engagement

Graduate study can often be isolating and transient, offering limited opportunities for community building and interactions, especially for international students, which make up almost 60% of our community, and the working graduate students who make up 75% of our community. Hence, in 2023, GSA has focused on delivering high quality, uplifted events such as the Graduate Art Prize Exhibition, GSA Breakfast Club, Speed Friending, Thesis Bootcamp, Comedy Shows, Ice Skating Rinks and the return of the GSA Graduate Ball.

Whilst over the last 30 years the nature and scale of our social events has changed, their aim has

always been the same: to help graduate students overcome isolation and feel connected to university life – because this significantly increases their likelihood of completing their studies.

In 2023, GSA committed to bringing our events to Southbank and Werribee campuses. We were exceptionally excited to work with the Veterinary School to deliver a standout day at Werribee with over 300 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Students in attendance, and are looking forward to developing our partnership with the students and staff at Werribee into 2024.

We know that graduate students have been deeply impacted by the rising cost of living. With increasing inflation, rent and costs of the essentials, our members have often had to work more to support themselves. That's why in 2023, GSA embarked on a mission to review and improve the Graduate Group Funding Model. We indexed the semesterly automatic payments from \$100 to \$450, and all the annual funding categories by \$100 for all ~170 Grad Groups. Moreover, we approved the implementation of a new upfront funding model, to ensure that Grad Group executives are not out of pocket for events. This is all in addition to the GSA Board's commitment to spending 10% of our funding on Grad Groups.

Moreover, our regular food trucks and Breakfast Club, has enabled us to provide a flexible and socially focussed strategy to fighting food insecurity on campus.

## Advocacy

GSA has a storied history of advocacy, including fighting Voluntary Student Unionism, taxation on graduate researcher Stipends, the Fares Fair Campaign, protection of graduate student dual delivery, and now in 2023 we add the National Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education, the establishment of the University of Melbourne Colleges Roundtable, the review into Safety on Placements, the SEDS

Review, the continuation of COVID-19 Stipend Extensions, pro-student changes to the Graduate Research Training Policy and indexation of graduate researcher Travel Awards and Stipends.

Our advocacy wins demonstrate that an independent GSA, focused on graduate students, whether domestic or international, research or coursework can deliver enviable results for our community. We recognise the unique needs of all graduate students, and the necessity for a specialised graduate student organisation which is focused on the members.

To better understand these needs, GSA launched its first Graduate Student Survey, and received almost 7000 responses from the community, making it the most responded survey at the University of Melbourne. The results, however, tell us that graduate students need even more support to combat cost-of-living, food insecurity, mental health, and accommodation. On the academic front, graduate students have told us that placements, flexible learning, and career support are the biggest issues that our members face. As we move into 2024, we are committed to addressing these needs in collaboration with our University and Government stakeholders.

## Governance

We are committed to unifying and supporting the graduate community, whilst maintaining good governance and compliance so that the GSA can effectively operate for the members.

In 2023 the GSA Board welcomed a new Chief Executive Officer, Sajal Goundar. Sajal has been hard at work at the GSA, working closely with all Board members to deliver on our shared vision.

With the Board and Representative Council structures matured, GSA focused on developing our Faculty Council to both engage and advocate for the members. In order to support a whole-of-association approach to collective action, we ran a combined off-site training, team building days to foster collaboration, and created faculty specific budgets to support our Faculty Councillors to work with different Grad Groups and schools.

The GSA team is committed to transparency and sustainable governance of the association. With GSA undertaking a full policy and process review in 2023, including but not limited to our governance,

complaints, financial and media policies. Moreover, we reviewed our Electoral Regulations to improve the fairness of elections and promote independent candidates.

In 2023 we began transforming our committee representative system to holistically incorporate elected representatives, especially those from the Faculty Council, and worked closely with the Office of the Provost to develop the Melbourne Student Forum.

## A Final Message from the President

Thank you for the privilege of being the GSA President and Board Chair for 2 years. Despite the many challenges, 2023 was filled with an incredible amount of joy and achievements.

To all GSA Student Representatives – thank you for your commitment to our community, your dedication and drive to stand up for graduate students is inspirational. To our staff – thank you for your endless support for graduate students, and desire to lift their voices.

To Sajal Goundar, our CEO – Thank you for working so closely with me to deliver for our community.





# GSA Board



**ROSALIE  
RITTER-JONES**  
(SHE/HER)

## Vice President

My name is Rosalie Ritter-Jones. I have a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Psychology, and I am now in my final semester of the Juris Doctor, studying law. I have been with the board since October 2022 and I have focused on ensuring good governance within GSA so that we can deliver the best experience and services to graduate students. I have thoroughly enjoyed representing and serving the graduate cohort during my time on the board and as Vice President.



**JUNYI JOHNNY  
ZHENG**  
(HE/HIM)

## Treasurer

My name is Junyi Johnny Zheng and I am currently completing a Masters in Information Systems. I joined the GSA Board in September 2021 and have been fulfilling the governance duties including finance, risk, audit and compliance. I have also been collaborating with the amazing GSA staff and student representatives from the Board and Representative Council on multiple exciting projects, including orientation planning, student engagement, the Reconciliation Action Plan research and development, and the International Student Mentorship Network.



**AMIN  
ABEDINI**  
(HE/HIM)

## Board Member

My name is Amin, and I am a third year Doctor of Medicine student. I first joined GSA as a Faculty Councillor in 2022 and was appointed to the Board in 2023, taking part in the Constitution & Electoral Regulations and Grad Group Working Groups. It is a great opportunity to be able to bring my seven years of experience at the university to student leadership and representation, and I hope to continue to represent graduate students – in particular, students completing placements away from university campuses. I look forward to working with GSA to best serve graduate students.



**DEVYANI  
VADKE**  
(SHE/HER)

## Board Member

Hello! My name is Devyani, and I am in my second year of a Master of Education. As a student, I have both witnessed and experienced large disparities in how various graduate demographics are positioned in university discourse. I look forward to collaborating with fellow representatives and staff to listen to, and advocate for, our diverse cohort, so we can work to close these gaps. With over six years of local and international public sector involvement, I aim to guide GSA's strategic direction to ensure a fair and supportive educational experience for all graduates.



**BOLOR  
JAMIYANDAGVA**  
(SHE/HER)

## Board Member

I'm Bolor Jamiyandagva and I'm a second-year Master of Education student. I joined the GSA Board in November 2022, and I am a member of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic Programs Committee of the Academic Board. I am passionate about educational equity and advocating for student rights, wellbeing, and experience. For the coming term, I aim to continue advocating for our graduate students and collaboratively work on the new Strategic Plan 2025-2030.



**YUJIA (LUCY)  
ZHANG**  
(SHE/HER)

## Board Member

Hi, I'm Lucy. I am glad to have the opportunity to represent graduate students at the University of Melbourne as a member of the GSA Board. With a Master's of Management (Accounting and Finance), I hope to bring valuable insights to my role. I am committed to promoting financial literacy and supporting graduate students pursuing careers in business and finance. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking and exploring Melbourne's vibrant food scene. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a voice for graduate students on the GSA Board.



# Representative Council Members



Ethan Chou  
(HE/HIM)

International Officer



Will McHenry  
(HE/HIM)

Education  
(Coursework) Officer



Bridie Cochrane-Holley  
(SHE/HER)

Disability and Equity  
Officer



Radhia Abdirahman  
(SHE/HER)

Health and Welfare  
Officer



Sakshi Chawla  
(SHE/HER)

Environment and  
Sustainability Officer



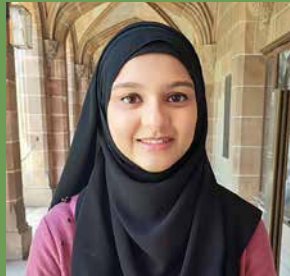
Jordan Di Natale  
(HE/HIM)

Activities Officer



Ifrah Saeed  
(SHE/HER)

Education (Research)  
Officer



Areej Shahid  
(SHE/HER)

Families Officer



Ester Liana  
(SHE/HER)

Women's Officer



Ned MANUS  
(HE/HIM)

Queer Officer

# Faculty Council Members

## Architecture, Building and Planning

Sagun Anand  
Arnav Goyal

## Arts

Dimple Malhotra  
Reymond Pepito

## Business and Economics

Glenn Pandelaki

## Education

Benjamin Cronshaw  
Siti Fathonah Wijayanti

## Fine Arts and Music

Ioannis Sidiropoulos

## Engineering and Information Technology

Hanh Nguyen  
Farid Fazel

## Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Carmela Barcelona  
Riyaben Patel

## Law

Aileen San Jose  
Azzaya Enkhjarga

## Science

Nonica Gurralla

GSA would like to  
thank all our former  
Board, Representative  
Council and Faculty  
Council members who  
served in 2023



# Working Groups and Sub-committees

The GSA Board established working groups and sub-committees to support the strategic advocacy and program delivery for graduate students. The working groups and sub-committees were empowered to provide strategic advice and support to ensure that the desired advocacy and program delivery outcomes were met within specified timelines, with proper input and advice.



## WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-COMMITTEES

### Grad Groups Working Group

#### Chair

Rosalie Ritter-Jones  
(Vice President)

#### Members

Amin Abedini (Board Member),  
Jordan Di Natale (Activities  
Officer), Sakshi Chawla  
(Environment &  
Sustainability Officer)

#### Staff Responsible

Munaf Bhatkar (Manager Student  
Engagement), Kelvin Hoang  
(Manager of Business  
Operations & Finance)

#### Admin & Operational Staff Support

Mahdieh Imanzadeh  
(Student Engagement Officer,  
Grad Groups)

### Strategic Advocacy Working Group

#### Chair

Johnny Junyi Zheng  
(Board Member)

#### Members

Nidhi Sikka (Board Member),  
Will McHenry (Education  
(Coursework) Officer), Ifrah Saeed  
(Education (Research) Officer),  
Bridie Cochrane-Holley (Disability  
and Equity Officer), Riya Patel  
(Medicine, Dentistry and Health  
Sciences Faculty Councillor)

#### Staff Responsible

Christina Murambi (Manager  
Policy & Advocacy)

#### Admin & Operational Staff Support

Hiruni Walimunige  
(Policy and Advocacy Officer)

### Strategic Plan Working Group

#### Chair

Jesse Gardner-Russell  
(President)

#### Members

Yingchen Zhao (Board Member),  
Bolor Jamiyandagva (Board  
Member), Radhia Abdirahman  
(Health & Welfare Officer), Ethan  
Chou (International Officer), Arnav  
Goyal (Architecture, Building  
and Planning Faculty Councillor),  
Reymond Pepito (Arts Faculty  
Councillor)

#### Staff Responsible

Sajal Goundar (GSA CEO)

#### Admin & Operational Staff Support

Kavisha Garg (Governance  
and Executive Officer)

### International Graduate Student Engagement Strategy Working Group

#### Chair

Yujia (Lucy) Zhang  
(Board Member)

#### Members

Junyi Johnny Zheng (Board  
Member), Ethan Chou  
(International Officer), Jeya Harini  
Umashankar (Business and  
Economics Faculty Councillor),  
Sagan Anand (Architecture,  
Building and Planning Faculty  
Councillor), Hanh Nguyen  
(Engineering and IT Faculty  
Councillor)

#### Staff Responsible

Liana Moore (Student  
Engagement Coordinator)

#### Admin & Operational Staff Support

Shradda Gurung (Student  
Engagement Officer)

### Constitution, Electoral Regulations & Governance Charter Working Group

#### Chair

Yingchen Zhao (General Secretary)

#### Members

Rosalie Ritter-Jones (VP), Amin  
Abedini (Board Member)

#### Staff Responsible

Sajal Goundar (GSA CEO)

#### Admin & Operational Staff Support

Lily Day (Senior Policy &  
Advocacy Officer)

### Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Sub-Committee

#### Chair

Yingchen Zhao (General  
Secretary)

#### Members

Junyi Johnny Zheng  
(Treasurer)

Bolor Jamiyandagva  
(Board Member)

Yujia (Lucy) Zhang  
(Board Member)

#### Staff

Sajal Goundar  
(GSA CEO)

Kelvin Hoang  
(Manager of Business  
Operations & Finance)



# Graduate Committee Representatives

Graduate students play a vital role in shaping university policies and decisions by serving on various committees, ensuring direct representation of their peers' perspectives and needs. GSA actively nominates and supports these representatives, seeking individuals passionate about advocating for graduate student interests and capable of representing diverse viewpoints.

When committee vacancies arise, GSA recruits new graduate representatives through its student networks, prioritising applicants dedicated to championing graduate concerns. Interested

students can apply for these roles via GSA's website and may undergo interviews with the Policy and Advocacy team.

Newly appointed committee representatives are invited to attend a comprehensive training and induction session. Here, they receive valuable insights into GSA, the demographics of the graduate student population, university committee structures, and effective representation strategies. By facilitating group training sessions, we encourage networking among representatives, fostering collaborative relationships from the outset.



## MISCONDUCT PANEL REPRESENTATIVES

Alice Kim	(Mohamed) Sharaf Raufdeen Isman	Si (Delphine) Lin
Kevin Mao		Nicholas Tye
Patrick Bradfield Smith	John Nguyen	Kimberley Koh
Ruby Craven	Nathan Avis	Jemma Lowe
Xingyu (Rita) Chen	Ariel (Ari) Palti	Ruobing Zhang
Benjamin Cronshaw	Yena Kim	Shixin Wang
Bayley Logan	Monica Huang	Pulasthi Pathirana
Mayra Bornacelly	Hayes Cheng	Harsh Mangla
Meng Hao	Finn Stephenson	Jiajia (Liz) Deng
Julia (Jing) Tian	Elysia Zickert	Harshita Roy
Yushy Zhou	Michael Donato	Tony Chen

## COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES 2023

Alice Kim	Ioannis Sidiropoulos	Reymond Pepito
Bolor Jamiyandagva	Jasmine Sawant	Riyaben Patel
Bridie Cochrane-Holley	Jesse Gardner-Russell	Rosalie Ritter-Jones
Carmela Barcelona	Johnny Zheng	Ruoyi Gan
Devyani Vadke	Jordan Di Natale	Sagrika Chugh
Dimple Malhotra	Kevin Mao	Sakshi Chawla
Ester Liana	Mindy Kim	Tess Corbel
Ethan Chou	Ned Manus	Valeria Morelli
Farid Fazel Mojtahedi	Nonica Gurralla	Will McHenry
Georgia Caruana	Priyanka Ganapathy Valli	Yingchen Zhao
Glenn Pandelaki	Radhia Abdirahman	
Ifrah Saeed	Rashika Bahl	



02

# Meet Our Staff





# A Message From the CEO

## SAJAL GOUNDAR (GSA CEO)



In 2023, GSA underwent a period of revamping its operations to better address the needs of graduate students, taking into account feedback and consultations from the community. The extensive response received from graduate students in our survey underscored their engagement and commitment. Throughout the year, we pursued strategies to enhance engagement, bolster GSA's presence, and cultivate the next cohort of staff and student leaders, positioning GSA for an exciting new phase. Challenges stemming from the cost of living remained a top priority, and our organisation remains dedicated to collaborating with the graduate student community to ensure their needs are effectively addressed.

Our diverse range of programs spanning around representation, academic support, transition to work, health and welfare, and many more,

continued to thrive throughout the year. The highly anticipated return of the Graduate Ball after a four-year hiatus being a standout highlight. Additionally, the completion of external restoration works in the historic 1888 building marked a significant milestone, welcoming students back to a cherished heritage site beloved by the graduate community.

Our student-run governance structure continued to mature and evolve, being led by a board that was transparent and accountable to our members in our decision-making. We also had a fully functional representative council looking after different portfolios for the graduate community such as activities, women's, international, health and welfare, families, queer, education, environment and sustainability and disability and equity.

2023 also saw the largest-ever faculty council being in place to support their faculty cohorts. Additionally, there were working groups established within GSA comprising of graduate students focusing on major pieces of work in the year. GSA also had graduate students being part of various committees throughout the University. Our robust sustainable governance structure allows us to best support the academic, career and professional development of our all-elected representatives.

A major piece of work for 2023 was to grow our partnerships within the University to utilise resources efficiently and better support the graduate student community.

We managed to reengage, rebuild, and strengthen our relations with Student and Scholarly Services, Chancellery, Provost, UMSU, MU Sport, Melbourne Business School, Murrup Barak and many more. It is through these partnerships, that we were able to expand our reach, advocate collaboratively and offer more opportunities and resources to our graduate community. In addition, one of the key aims is also

to bring GSA's presence to other campuses. This year we have managed to do that for Southbank campus and Werribee campus. Graduate students on those campuses were delighted to have GSA's team come down and offer the services on their campuses.

GSA has more than 160 affiliated Grad Groups which are made up of vibrant student-led societies designed to foster interaction, well-being, and learning opportunities among the diverse graduate student community at the University of Melbourne. Grad Groups are the heartbeat of our campus, and its members make up most of GSA's membership. To better support the groups, this year we worked to come up with a new funding model. GSA will continue to invest in Grad Groups as a cornerstone of graduate student life.

We have a small but impactful team of professional staff running the day-to-day operations of GSA. All staff have worked immensely hard supporting the graduate students and we are blessed to have such a vibrant team. The Student Engagement Team has delivered excellent and highly complementary student information services, training, events and activities throughout the year. The Policy and Advocacy Team has undertaken a range of advocacy and policy campaigns to support our graduates. The team worked through new ways to meaningfully engage with and advocate for graduate students. The Operations Team worked to support GSA to achieve its strategic goals within the operational frameworks to ensure long-term sustainability of the organisation. The team

supported the areas of finance, human resources, occupational health and safety, marketing and communications, risks, compliance and facilities.

It has been an absolute honor to take on the role of GSA CEO, guiding our organisation through a crucial period of revamping to better serve the graduate student community. I have been very fortunate to work with our hardworking President and General Secretary, Jesse-Gardner Russell and Yingchen Zhao, closely throughout this phase for GSA. Jesse, Yingchen and many other Board, Representative and Faculty Council members have demonstrated incredible leadership and support to staff and our membership. In particular, I thank the Board for their immense support over the past year, who I have worked with closely.

A big thank you to all the current and former staff, board, representative and faculty council members who have strived so hard for GSA to be 'the heart of graduate student life'. Also, a heartfelt thanks to the graduate students for their tremendous response to the GSA graduate survey. GSA will make every effort to take all the feedback on to create more value for graduate students. In the years to come, GSA will be providing tailor-made services to graduate students at a bigger and better scale with a lot of collaboration to continue supporting graduate students. This will be reflected in building up our new strategic plan which will take us through to 2030. We have built the foundations and governance structure for an even stronger and more effective GSA in the future.



Professional staff of GSA 2023

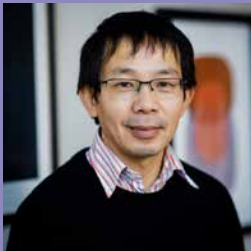


# GSA Staff 2023

## OUR STAFF



**Sajal Goundar**  
GSA CEO



**Kelvin Hoang**  
Manager of Business Operations & Finance



**Munaf Bhatkar**  
Manager Student Engagement



**Christina Murambi**  
Manager Policy & Advocacy



**Carole Griffin**  
HR & OHS Officer



**Eliza Davis**  
Marketing & Communications Coordinator



**Elizabeth Swain**  
Digital Content Officer



**Hiruni Walimunige**  
Policy and Advocacy Officer



**Kavisha Garg**  
Governance and Executive Officer



**Liana Moore**  
Student Engagement Coordinator



**Lily Day**  
Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer



**Lisa Murden**  
Student Information Officer



**Mahdieh Imanzadeh**  
Student Engagement Officer – Grad Groups



**Patrick Ryan**  
Graphic Design Officer



**Shradda Gurung**  
Student Engagement Officer



**Tuan Quoc (Trevor) Nguyen**  
Finance & Compliance Officer

## CASUAL STAFF

Aya Uchida

Ke Tang

Sahil Sinha

Arina Aghdasi

Koukou Zhang

Yan-Sin Huang

Chinzorig Dansran

Rashmi Lenin

Lisa Jude

Deeksha Singh

## THANK YOU TO OUR FORMER STAFF

Danielle How

Jinni Low

Paul Holgate

Eren Muller

Kaushal Srikanth

Razi Pilli

Ivana Eleftheriadis

Kerry Tucker

Sophie Valkan

Jeremy Waite

Madhuri Sawant







## EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS

**Above Quota Elections Pty Ltd**  
Election 2023 management

**AccruMelb**  
Audit

**Assure**  
EAP program

**Black Truffle Catering**  
Thesis Bootcamp

**Clear Systems Pty Ltd**  
Stage setup

**Cortez Corporation Pty Ltd**  
Printing services

**Easy Signs Pty Ltd**  
Printing services

**Ecco Catering**  
Thesis Bootcamp

**eSafeKids**  
Student parent workshop series

**Fresh Photography**  
Photography Services

**Hatch Digital**  
GSA website development

**Insync Survey Pty Ltd**  
Graduate students survey

**Johnson Recruitment**  
Recruitment

**Josh Farr Consulting Pty Ltd**  
Speaker series

**Keiran Pigeon**  
Website maintenance

**Keynote Entertainment**  
Speaker Series

**Landmark Printing**  
Printing services

**Minus18 Foundation**  
Training

**Moore's**  
Legal services

**Nila Shekarvand**  
Art class

**Non Profit Training**  
Governance training

**Nostalgia Creative**  
Art Prize videography

**Plaza Ballroom**  
Graduate Ball Venue

**Real Response**  
First aid training

**Robyn Angus**  
Education workshop  
- Budgeting & Saving

**Sean Croon**  
CV Writers program /  
Future Career Design

**Sexual Health Victoria**  
Sexual Health Workshop

**The Executive Chair Pty Ltd**  
Recruitment

**Tracey Fong**  
Website development

**Victoria Arts Centre Trust**  
Arts Award

**Wholehearted Life Pty Ltd**  
LEAD program

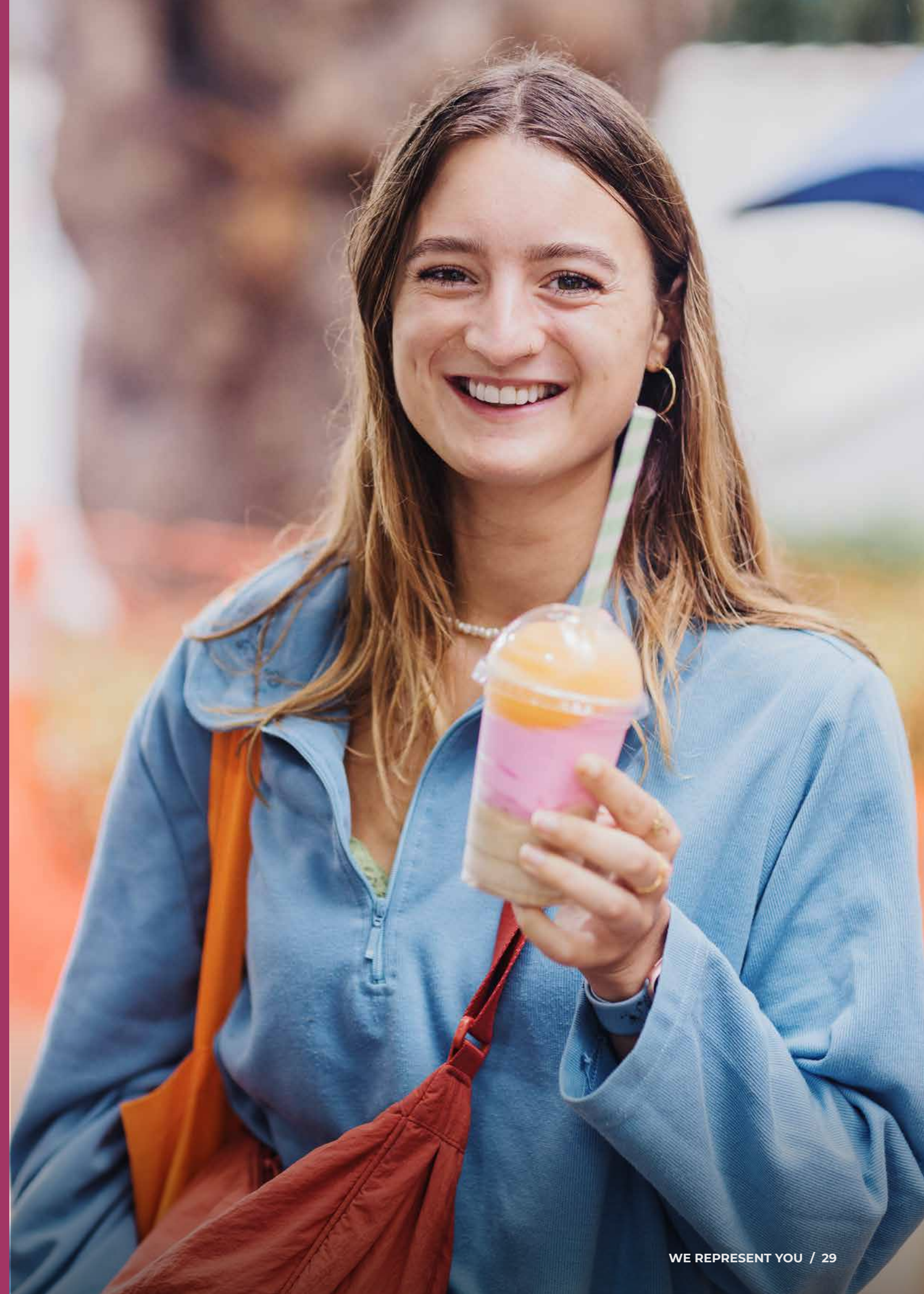
**YOGAMIGOS Pty Ltd**  
Yoga, meditation & pilates class





03

# We Represent You





# Policy and Advocacy

## AIM AND PURPOSE

The Policy and Advocacy Team aids elected graduate representatives in formulating, articulating, and advocating for their policy and program proposals. We assist representatives in crafting effective arguments and delivering persuasive presentations to various stakeholders, including the university, government entities, and other relevant parties.

## KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

2023 was a busy and exciting year for the policy and advocacy team, the team worked hard to identify and address advocacy issues to benefit graduate students and support GSA's advocacy efforts, vision, and goals. Our advocacy efforts focused on ensuring our policy and advocacy work was evidence based, student led and offered a collaborative approach with our graduate student representatives for an inclusive and thriving graduate student community.

Some of our advocacy work included the GSA student engagement survey, which was an opportunity to hear from all graduate students on how GSA can effectively support them and improve our services to provide programs that meet their needs; to ensure that all GSA services and programs are student centred, and evidence-based in responding to the needs of graduate students. We also provided feedback to ensure graduate perspectives on all aspects of the University of Melbourne Respect initiatives, especially around sexual misconduct policies at the University; this led to GSA active participation and contribution to the State Government's Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education. We also collaborated with our student representatives on monthly townhalls, which provided opportunities to meet and hear from graduate students on issues affecting them, leading to our student representatives successfully working on these advocacy issues to represent the needs of their fellow students. We also worked with the University of Melbourne, Melbourne Plus program for recognised certification for all our GSA student representatives for their excellent leadership skills and advocacy work.

## SUBMISSIONS CONDUCTED

### Australian Government inquiry into cost of living

GSA's submission focused on responding to the cost-of-living pressures faced by postgraduate students at the University of Melbourne. In our submission, GSA recommended the government raise the Research Training Program (RTP) stipend rate to match the minimum wage and expand income support payments to all domestic postgraduate students. Cost of living pressures are driven by low incomes and the high cost of living in Melbourne. GSA as an organisation has recently been forced to refocus resources from its traditional advocacy priorities onto poverty alleviation initiatives.

### Australian Government consultation on the extent and nature of poverty in Australia

Submission to the federal government on the inquiry on poverty in Australia. The inquiry was essential to GSA's advocacy work in addressing a number of issues GSA has previously advocated on, including identifying and addressing the drivers of poverty and its impact on educational outcomes.

### Australian Government's inquiry into the worsening rental crisis in Australia

This submission focussed on raising awareness of the challenges faced by University of Melbourne graduate students when trying to find affordable rental accommodation. The policy and advocacy team collected information and feedback from graduate students about their experiences with renting in Australia, particularly challenges graduate students are facing due to the worsening rental crisis, to raise awareness of their experiences while also advocating for their needs.

“Helping articulate and advocate for our graduate representatives”





## SUBMISSIONS CONDUCTED

### Australian Government inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers

GSA collected information and feedback from graduate students on their experiences with being unpaid carers, to further understand the value of unpaid carers; especially the needs of specific cohorts such as young carers, First Nations carers, LGBTIQ+ carers, or culturally and linguistically diverse carers. The policy and advocacy team used the feedback and insights from students to identify, advocate, and inform GSA's submission on graduate student's unique experiences of being unpaid carers.



### GSA feedback into Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) consultations

TEQSA's guidance notes intend to provide greater clarity around the application of select regulatory standards and practices and outline what evidence TEQSA may look for to be satisfied that the Higher Education Standards Framework requirements are being met.

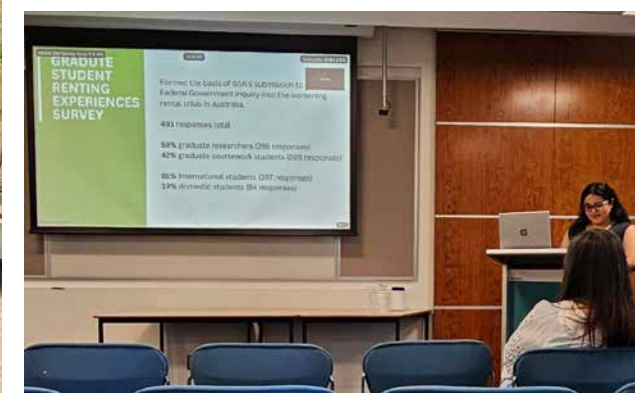
GSA provided feedback on numerous TEQSA's guidance notes, including 'diversity and equity', 'student grievances and complaints', 'wellbeing and safety,' and 'consultation on assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence.' The policy and advocacy team consulted with GSA student representatives for feedback on all guidance notes, to ensure all submissions offered student perspectives and insights.

### Consultation - The Universities Accord Interim Report

The Australian Universities Accord aims to drive lasting and transformative reform in Australia's higher education system. GSA reviewed and provided valued feedback to the Universities Accord Interim Report on the experiences of graduate students, after consulting with graduate students for their feedback, insights, and experiences. GSA provided feedback on areas relevant to our graduate students and advocacy work such as international students, research students and student safety on campus.

### University of Melbourne in-person exams and flexible learning advocacy work

Policy and Advocacy collaborated with GSA's Disability & Equity Officer for reports to The University of Melbourne on student concerns regarding flexible learning and in-person exams. The reports successfully raised graduate student concerns with mandatory in-person learning and provided essential feedback to the Student Equity and Disability Service (SEDS) review regarding support for graduate students with in-person exams, to ensure an equitable and supportive approach to in-person exams and flexible learning.



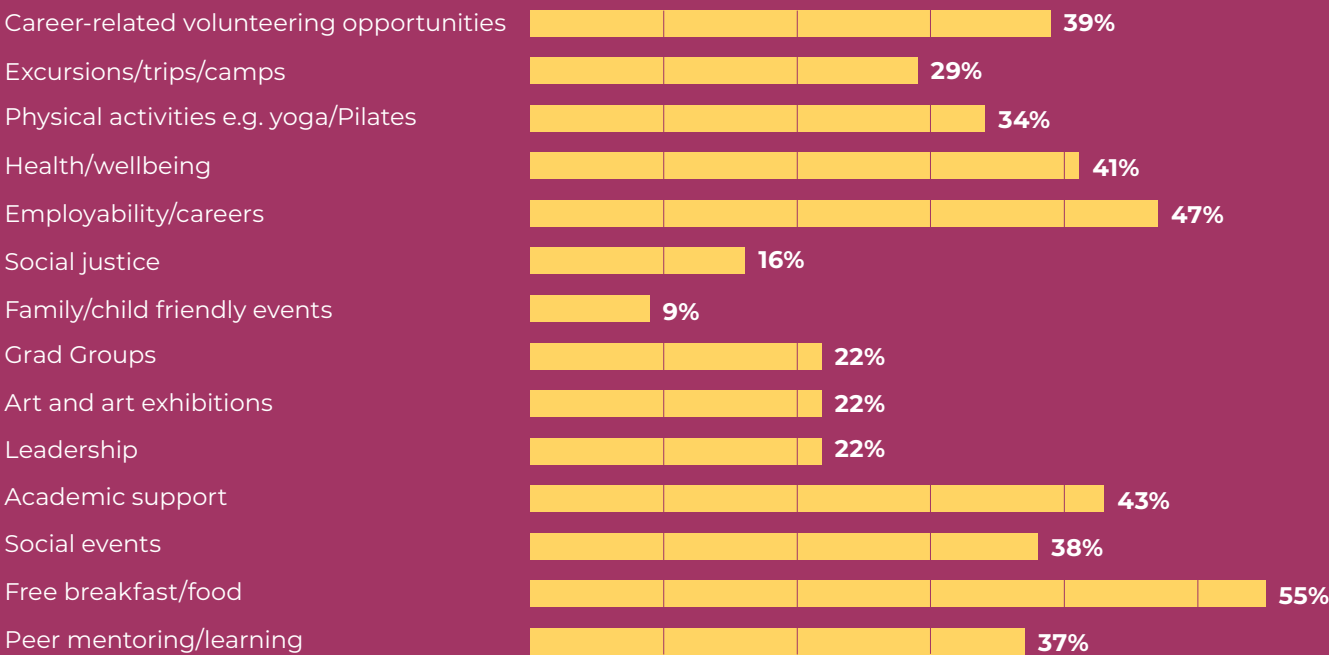


# Graduate Student Survey

A comprehensive survey was conducted through a combination of in-person events at Parkville, Southbank, and Werribee campuses, alongside online delivery, targeting graduate students. The online survey, spanning three weeks from October 16th to November 3rd, 2023, was exclusively open to currently enrolled graduate students, resulting in an impressive response rate of nearly 7,000.

To incentivise participation, enticing prizes such as a MacBook Pro Laptop, iPads, and gift vouchers were offered, effectively engaging the student community. Notably, the majority of respondents fell within the age bracket of 19 to 29 years old, comprising 71% of the total, with a significant portion being international students, constituting 59% of the responses.

## Engagement activities graduate students are interested in:

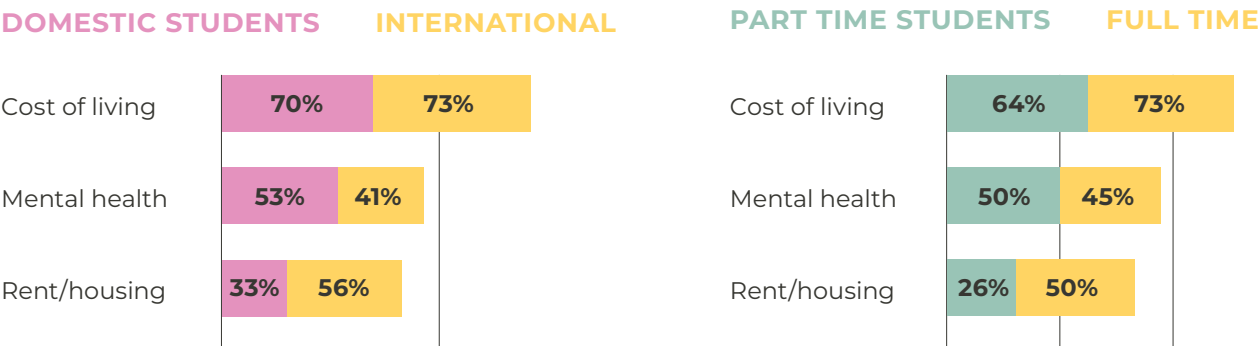


**55%**  
of respondents were interested in Free Breakfast/food

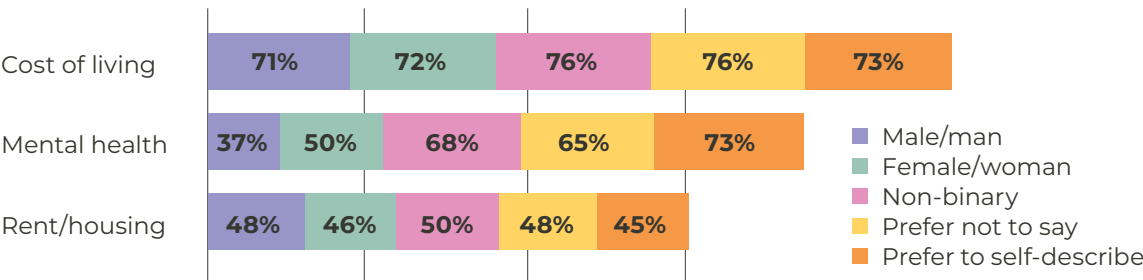
**47%**  
of respondents were interested in Employability/careers

**43%**  
of respondents were interested in academic support

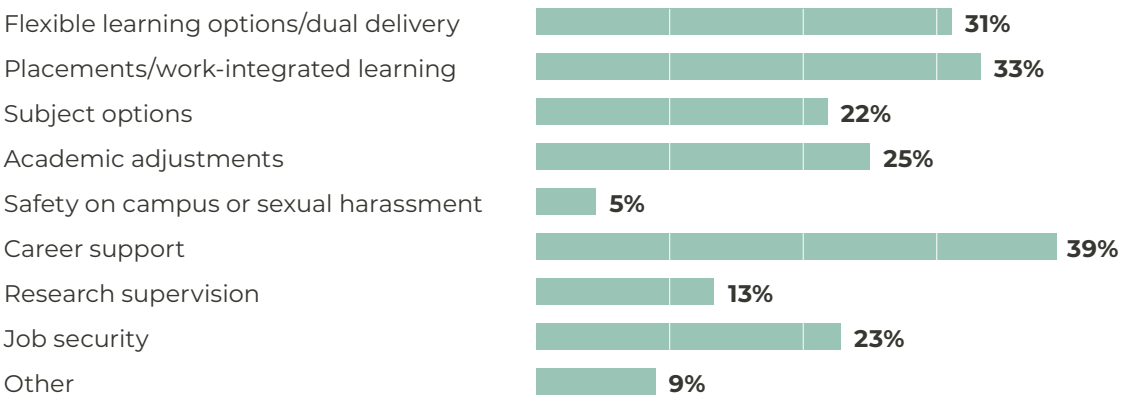
## Demographic spilt of the top 3 issues affecting students in their day-to-day life:



## GENDER



## The biggest university issues affecting students:



'Other' university issues facing respondents include balancing employment with university workload, career support, access to paid placements/internships and staff strikes.

**40%**  
of domestic students said flexible learning options/dual delivery was the biggest issue

**47%**  
of international students said career support was the biggest issue



# How we Engage






# Student Engagement

In 2023, the Student Engagement Team at GSA prioritised enhancing in-person engagement among graduate students through various initiatives, such as the Breakfast Club and the showcasing of the Art Prize finalists. A significant highlight of the year was the successful revival of our Graduate Ball, a major event that hadn't taken place since 2019.


Additionally, the team played a crucial role in facilitating the rollout of the GSA student survey through on-site activities at the South Bank and Werribee campuses, ensuring broader participation and valuable feedback. There was also a notable increase in hybrid training and development activities and workshops aimed at addressing both the academic and social needs of graduate students, underscoring our commitment to holistic student support and growth.

## Transition to Employment

**728**   
Students attended  
webinars + workshops

 **45%**  
increase in  
workshop  
attendance  
from 2022

**5542**   
Breakfasts served  
45% increase from 2022

**9000+**  
Attendees at  
events in 2023 

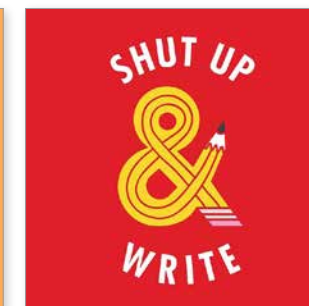
## Student information and referrals

The GSA Helpline (phone support) and GSA Information services were effectively promoted and utilised by both domestic and international students throughout the reporting period. The Student Engagement team consistently delivered timely and appropriate responses to inquiries from graduate students and other members of the university community via various channels, including front desk interactions, email, phone, and social media.

Moreover, the team played a pivotal role in enhancing systems and processes to support Student Misconduct Hearing sessions, ensuring they were well-resourced with trained student representatives. Additionally, they facilitated guided tours of our historic 1888 building during Orientation sessions.

## Academic support

In 2023, GSA maintained our strong program of academic support. The popular 'Shut Up & Write' program was increased to weekly sessions in a hybrid format, to allow greater access for graduate students. 'Thesis Bootcamp' returned in 2023 following the success from the previous years and was a highlight among many attendees. Popular sessions with Campus Consultancy were held in Semester 1, including Time Management and Goal Setting, to support students to set themselves up for a productive year of study.



## BREAKFAST CLUB

The popular GSA Breakfasts continued in 2023, with meals provided for graduate students every Tuesday and Thursday during Semester 1 and Semester 2. There was an increase in attendance during the year, with an average of 170 students attending each session in Semester 2. Overall, the program provided 5,542 meals to our graduate students, an increase of 45% from 2022. It was wonderful to be able to support students with a hearty breakfast twice a week and provide a space for students to relax and connect over a shared meal.





## GALAXY GALA

The GSA Ball returned in 2023 after a 3-year hiatus, with the 'Galaxy Gala' taking place on 15 November 2023 at the prestigious Plaza Ballroom. Tickets for graduate students were generously subsidised by GSA and the 500-person event sold out within minutes of tickets being released.

The glamorous evening included a three-course meal, beverages, a photobooth and roaming professional photographer, a stunning galaxy-themed atmosphere, and entertainment provided by a string quartet followed by a DJ to ensure the dance floor was pumping!

The evening was a huge success, and both staff and students are eagerly anticipating the GSA Ball in 2024.



## ORIENTATION

GSA welcomed all new and returning graduate students with a series of Orientation events and fun activities in both semesters. Activities emphasised GSA's commitment to enhancing the experience of graduate students and showcased many of the in-semester activities available, as well as encouraging graduate students to become familiar with GSA and the 1888 Building.

Standout events included 'The Comedy Scam Show' with Nicholas J. Johnson and 'The Tim Ellis Comedy Magic Show', 'Speed Friending' sessions and Therapy Dog sessions, while various food trucks outside the 1888 Building ensured graduate students were well fed throughout GSA Orientation weeks.





## ART AND CRAFT PRIZE

The GSA Art Prize, an annual initiative under our Engaged and Healthy Communities mandate, celebrates creativity and embraces the wide-ranging interests of our student body beyond their academic pursuits. In 2023, entries portrayed students' innovative connections with their communities and highlighted the values close to their hearts.

For the second year running, the Art Prize was held in person at the Art Centre Melbourne. The theme of the competition this year was 'Community'. This year we received a massive 200 entries for the Art Prize including photographs, digital artwork, paintings and drawings.

Now in its eighth year, the GSA Art Prize continues to serve as a testament to the rich tapestry of interests and talents within our graduate community. Each submission captures the unique connections students forge with their surroundings, showcasing their innovative expressions and heartfelt values.

### Why Community?

We chose "Community" as the theme for the 2023 Graduate Art Prize to celebrate the idea of people coming together and supporting each other.

"Community" represents the connections we share, no matter our differences, and how these connections make us feel like we belong. Through this theme, we encouraged artists to explore what community means to them – the good times, the challenges, and everything in between.

By showcasing artwork that reflects the diversity and strength of communities, we hope to encourage conversations, promote inclusivity, and help people appreciate the communities that make our lives richer.

Our  
2023  
winners

### 2023 Art Prize Winner – Hye Jin Jeon & Qian Luo – You and Me

**2023 Art Prize 2nd Place:** Melanie Williams – Foreigner's Gods

**2023 Art Prize 3rd Place:** Sandra Penman – Steady Forest

**2023 Art Prize Innovation Award:** Georgia Black – A Place To Belong

**2023 Art Prize People's Choice Award:** Lilik Andriyani – Life After Disaster

**2023 Art Prize Personal Experience Award:** Lahni Thavarajah – Collection of Identities Series

**2023 Art Prize Global Community Awareness Award:** Hajar Sadegh Zadeh – Women Community In Afghanistan

### We also thank our esteemed judges:

**Bon Mott** – Artist & Curator

**Shanysa Mcconville** – Curator

**Sara Pheasant** – CEO of UMSU

**Nila Shekarvand** – Artist

**Jess Lyons** – Ceramic Artist

**Natalie Seiler** – 2022 Art Prize Winner

**Manda Wolf** – Artist and Curator



**Hajar Sadegh Zadeh**  
Women Community In Afghanistan



**Sandra Penman**  
Steady Forest



**Lahni Thavarajah**  
Collection of Identities Series



**Hye Jin Jeon & Qian Luo**  
You and Me



**Lilik Andriyani**  
Life After Disaster



**Melanie Williams**  
Foreigner's Gods



**Georgia Black**  
A Place To Belong



## NEW INITIATIVES



In 2023, GSA expanded its 'Transition to Work' programs with the addition of two new offerings in 2023, including a 'Job Application Challenge' hosted by Future Career Design, where students received individualised feedback on their job-specific CVs and applications through detailed video sessions.

In collaboration with Johnson Recruitment, GSA introduced 'Speed Interview' sessions in Semester 2, where students were invited to attend speed interview sessions. Students who completed the process were given personal feedback to help them brush up on their interviewing skills.

GSA also provided exam support at Wilson Hall, offering refreshments and emergency stationery to graduate students during exam periods, with plans for further expansion in 2024.

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

GSA continued its commitment to providing wellbeing and financial aid support to graduate students throughout 2023. Grocery vouchers, coffee vouchers and other forms of material aid were distributed to many students to alleviate food and living expenses. Additionally, support for graduate student parents was extended through access to GSA family rooms and a series of online Parenting and Studying workshops.

Wellbeing initiatives such as online yoga, meditation and Pilates sessions were available throughout the year, ensuring accessibility to all campuses. In-person events including art classes, speed friending sessions, and drop-in crafting sessions were well-received, fostering a sense of community among graduate students. Online sessions covering reproductive health, Visa information, and International Student insurance were held, while Budgeting sessions were introduced in Semester 2 to enhance financial literacy.

To address mental health concerns, GSA organised a speaker series coordinated by the Student Engagement team. Events such as 'Leave Your Comfort Zone' by Kaley Chu and 'Conquering Worry & Anxiety' by Toni Powell received positive feedback for their relevance and effectiveness.

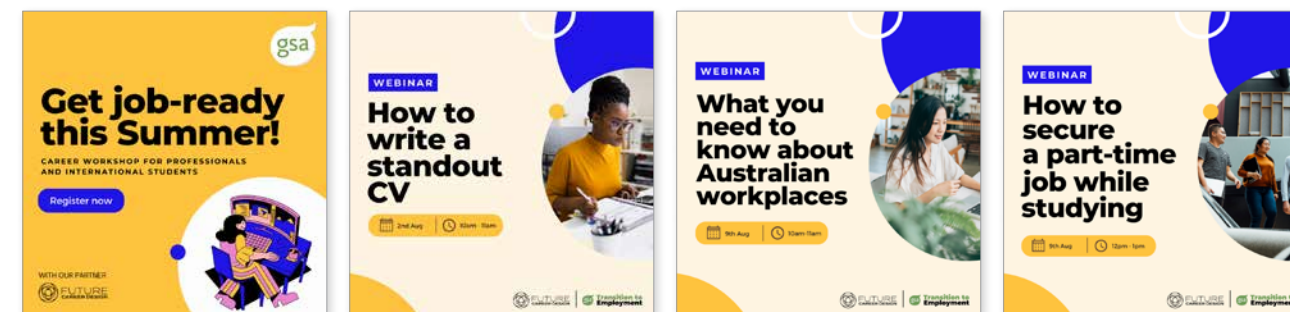


## TRANSITION TO WORK

### Transition to Employment Program

The 'Transition to Employment' Program, led by Sean Croon of Future Career Design, enabled numerous graduate students to participate in webinars and workshops designed to enable participants to unlock their career potential. Graduates have gained valuable skills and received resources and tactics on:

- Career planning
- CV writing
- Interview training
- Using LinkedIn for career development
- Personal branding
- Cover letters and selection criteria
- Recruitment tactics.



Due to the high demand from graduates in 2023, GSA increased the offerings from Future Career Design. In total, 598 students attended 16 webinars and 130 students participated in 13 workshops. Excellent feedback was received for all these very popular workshops and webinars and GSA looks forward to continuing to deliver the Transition to Employment program to support graduate student career development in 2024, in bigger and better ways.

### LEAD

LEAD (Leadership Exploration and Development) is a self-leadership program that supports graduates to build awareness of their values and strengths, develop resilience, and hone their own leadership style. Since 2022 the LEAD Program has been recognised as a component of Melbourne Plus, providing graduates who successfully complete the Program with digital credentials to recognise their achievement.

Facilitated by Kirsten Brown of Wholehearted Life and the Student Engagement team, LEAD was able to return to an in-person format for the first time since 2019. This format received excellent feedback and GSA looks forward to continuing to host the LEAD program in person in 2024.





# Communications and Marketing

## SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2023, our Marketing and Communications endeavors at GSA experienced exceptional growth and engagement across social media platforms, with a notable 30% total net increase in our social media audience, reaching a remarkable total of 1,228,846 impressions. Instagram was our strongest platform in terms of growth increasing by 1,664 followers. This increase was likely due to a higher frequency of posting, adding more Reel and video content into our content schedule to engage our graduate students and using more of our marketing budget on paid social ads.

We also saw an increase in User Generated Content where students were sharing their experiences at GSA on socials which was great to see. We have been able to reshare and utilise their content across our channels.

In 2024 we hope to extend this effort by including more student generated content on our socials and exploring additional social media platforms.

## GSA WEBSITE

A highlight of the year was the successful launch of the new GSA website. The new website provides an intuitive interface for students to stay informed about GSA events, initiatives, and resources, including an updated events calendar.

This milestone significantly enhanced connectivity and engagement within our graduate student community and made it easier for the marketing team to share new information with graduate students and the wider community.



Throughout 2023, GSA celebrated remarkable achievements. Our Graduate Art Prize received an overwhelming response, with 200 submissions showcasing the immense talent within our community. Additionally, tickets to the GSA Ball sold out within a mere 15 minutes, highlighting the event's popularity and the success of our marketing efforts.

A significant project in 2023 included the promotion of the Graduate Student Survey. By utilising paid ads, posters, newsletters, and social media content we gathered almost 7000 submissions from University of Melbourne graduate students, reflecting active involvement and trust in GSA as a platform for voicing opinions.


In conclusion, 2023 was a year of remarkable growth and achievement for GSA's Marketing and Communications efforts, reflecting our dedication to enhancing student engagement and community involvement. As we move forward, we remain committed to continued innovation and excellence in serving the needs of our graduate student community.


**“Tickets to the GSA Ball sold out within a mere 15 minutes, highlighting the event’s popularity and success of our teams marketing efforts”**







# Social Media Highlights

1.2M   
Impressions  
32% increase from 2022

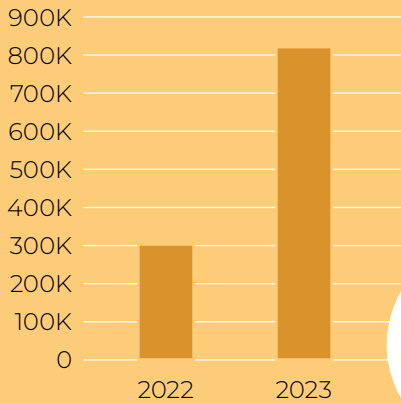
25K   
Engagements  
25% increase from 2022

30%   
Growth in total net audience in 2023

4K  Post-link clicks across all social media  
44% increase from 2022

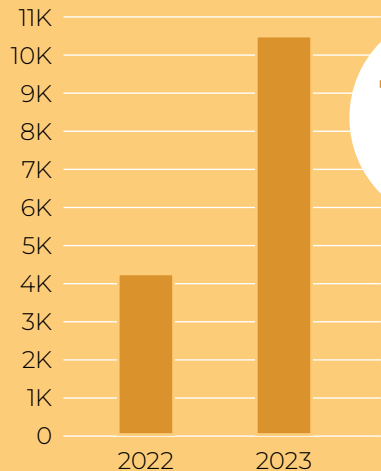
## Instagram Highlights:

 IMPRESSIONS



166% Increase

 ENGAGEMENTS



148% Increase

## Most Engaging Social Media Content:

- 1 GSA Graduate Ball
- 2 Breakfast Club
- 3 Photo Carousels

## Email and Website:



50k  
Subscribers

29  
Newsletters and Welcome emails sent

194,399  
Newsletter opens



68K  
New visitors

312K  
Page views

GSA Ball  
Most popular page

## Social Media Highlights:



815,412  
Impressions

10,541  
Engagements

5,498  
Followers



392,783  
Impressions

12,525  
Engagements

15,042  
Likes



39.4  
Watch hours

1,576  
Views

17,218  
Impressions



19,143  
Impressions

2,574  
Engagements

1,146  
Followers



### GSA HANDBOOK

The GSA handbook remains an invaluable resource, serving both students and staff as a comprehensive guide to everything GSA offers, along with essential University information. Particularly noteworthy are the maps of the 1888 Building, which stand out as a vital resource. Students frequently turn to these maps for guidance on study spaces, room bookings, and facility locations.



# Meet the Grad Groups





# Grad Groups

GSA's Grad Groups are student-led communities that bring together graduate students at the University of Melbourne and are supported by GSA . They cover a wide range of activities, from academic to creative, and play a big part in building a strong community for graduate students at The University of Melbourne.

Being part of a Grad Group means joining a supportive community where you can forge friendships, enhance skills, and delve into new interests. Whether through networking events, workshops, or cultural exchanges, Grad Groups offer valuable opportunities for personal and academic growth, enriching the campus experience for all involved.

In 2023, we welcomed many new groups and are excited to keep growing and improving with the help of grad students in 2024.

GSA wishes to thank all of our Grad Groups for their incredible work in 2023.

169

Total Grad Groups

21,898

Total memberships

## 2023 ACTIVE GRAD GROUPS

- 180 Degrees Consulting Melbourne (180DC)
- African Studies Group (ASG)
- Anatomy and Physiology Student Society (APSS)
- Animal Welfare Science Students of the UoM (AWSSUM)
- AntiTHESIS
- Asia Institute Postgraduate Group (AIPG)
- Ausdroid
- Australia Awards Scholars Club (AASC)
- Australian Holistic Health Student Association (AHHSA)
- Australian Medical Sign Language Associaton
- Australian Students' Society of Haematology (ASSH)
- Bengali Cultural Club (BCC)
- Biomedical Engineering Postgraduate Society
- Bioinformatics Graduate Student Association (BGSa)
- Biosciences Postgraduate Society (BioPS)
- Built Industry Group (BIG)
- Burnley Campus Postgraduate Group (BCPG)
- BusinessOne Consulting
- Cancer Society of Melbourne University (CSM)
- Chemistry Postgraduate Society (CPS)
- Chilean Research Group of Australia (CREGA)
- Chinese Studies Research Group (CSRG)
- Classics & Archaeology Postgraduate Group (CAPG)
- Climate College Graduate Student Group (CCGSG)
- Computing and Information Systems Graduate Research Student Group (CIS GReS)
- Construction Students Association (CSA)
- Criminal and Family Law Association (CFLA)
- Crossing Borders Melbourne (CBM)
- Culture and Communication Graduate Committee (CCGC)
- Dental Research Students Association (DRSA)
- Dermatology Interest Society (DermIS)
- Earth Science Postgraduate Group (ESPG)
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering Research Student Association (EEERSA)
- Enable Prosthetics Melbourne
- Enactus
- EnviroSci Society (ESS)
- Ethnoforum
- FBE PhD Student Society (FBEPSS)

## 2023 ACTIVE GRAD GROUPS (CONTINUED)

- Film and TV Graduate Students Group (FTV Grad Group)
- Film, Art, Media and Entertainment Law Students Association (FAME LSA)
- Folding Our Futures (FOF)
- Geography Postgraduate Society (GPS)
- Global Consulting Group (GCG)
- Global Law Students Association (GLSA)
- Graduate Agriculture and Food Society (GAFS)
- Graduate Education Society (GES)
- Graduate House Student Group (GHSG)
- Graduate Infrastructure Engineering Society (GIES)
- Graduate Organisation of Development Students (GOODS)
- Graduate Researchers in Agriculture, Food and Ecosystems Sciences (GRAFES)
- Graduate Research Association MSPGH (GRAM)
- Graduate Researchers in Psychological Sciences (GRIPS)
- Graduate Social Science Society (GSSS)
- Graduate Yoga Society (GYS)
- Heart and Lung Society (HEALS)
- History Postgraduates Association (HPA)
- Indian Graduate Students Society (IGSS)
- Indian Institutes Graduates (I2G)
- Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA)
- International Graduate Student Wellbeing Group (IGSWG)
- International Melbourne Uni Graduate Volleyball Group (IMUGVG)
- Interprofessional Education and Practice Health Students Network (IPEP-HSN)
- Jacaranda Stock Market Society (JSMS)
- Korean Medical Society (KMS)
- Korean Postgraduate Student Association (KPSA)
- Later Law Students' Network (LLSN)
- Law Students for Refugees (LS4R)
- Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP)
- MD Badminton Club (MDBC)
- MD Choral and Acapella Society (MDCAS)
- MD Diverse Educational Backgrounds Society
- MD Queer (MDQ)
- Mechanical Engineering Research Student Association (MERSA)
- Med Moves (MM)
- Medical Creatives Collective (MCC)
- Medleys - The Med Revue
- Melbourne Business School Student Association (MBSSA)
- Melbourne Children's Campus Research Students Association (MCCRSA)
- Melbourne Dental Post-Graduate Group (MDPGG)
- Melbourne Dental Students Society (MDSS)
- Melbourne Emergency Student's Society (MESS)
- Melbourne Energy Students Association (MESA)
- Melbourne Graduate Music Society (MGMS)
- Melbourne Information Systems Graduate Association (MISGA)
- Melbourne Interdisciplinary Students' Society of Neuroscience (MISSioN)
- Melbourne International Property Students (MIPS)
- Melbourne Population and Global Health Students Society (MPGHSS)
- Melbourne Postgraduate International Relations Organisation (MPIRO)
- Melbourne Social Inclusion Club (MSIC)
- Melbourne South Asian Law Society (MSALS)
- Melbourne Sport Law Association
- Melbourne University Boxing (MUB)
- Melbourne University Chinese Debating Group (MUCDG)
- Melbourne University Civil and Structural Society (MUCSS)
- Melbourne University Electrical Engineering Club (MUEEC)
- Melbourne University Gastrointestinal Society (MUGIS)
- Melbourne University Genetics Postgraduate Society (MUGPS)
- Melbourne University Geomatics Society (MUGS)
- Melbourne University Graduate Christian Union (MUGCU)
- Melbourne University Law Students' Society (MULSS)
- Melbourne University at Mercy Students (MUMs)
- Melbourne University Medics Paediatric Society (MUMPS)
- Melbourne University Nepali Students' Society (MUNSS)
- Melbourne University Nursing Students' Society (MUNSS)
- Melbourne University Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society (MUOGS)



2023 ACTIVE GRAD GROUPS (CONTINUED)

- Melbourne University Physiotherapy Students Society (MUPSS Physio)
- Urban Collective (Melbourne University Planning Student Society (MUPSS))
- Melbourne University Procedural Society (MUPS)
- Melbourne University Tamil Sangam (MUTS)
- Melbourne University Taiwanese Student Association (MUTSA)
- MIGrads
- MSD Research Students Association (MSD RSA)
- Music Therapy Graduate Student Group (MTGSG)
- Navigators, The
- Neuropsychology Students Society (NSS)
- North American Melbourne Medical Students Society (NAMMSS)
- OCULUS
- Ophthalmic Research Biomedical Society (ORBS)
- One Health Research Society (OHRS)
- Outlook Rural Health Club (Moovin Health)
- OVS Research Crew
- Paraguayan Student Association (PSA)
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Research Students Society
- Pharmacology United with Biochemistry Students (PUBS)
- Philosophy Postgraduate Group (PPG)
- Postgraduate Association of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering Researchers (PACBER)
- Postgraduate Environment Network (PEN)
- Postgraduate Physics Students' Society (PPSS)
- Postgraduate Student Society for Infection and Immunity (POSSIIM)
- Postgraduates at Werribee (PAWS)
- Postgraduates of Veterinary Science (POVS)
- Psychiatry Students' Interest Society (PSI)
- Public Interest Law Network (PILN)
- Public Policy Grad Group (PPGG)
- Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgical Society (RASS)
- Rogue Crims - Criminology PhD Graduate Student Group
- Royal Women's Hospital (RWH) Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Newborn Health (ObCynNH) Student Society (ROSS)
- School of Languages and Linguistics (SOLL) Postgrad Group
- Social Work Association of Graduate Students (SWAGS)
- Society of Marketing and Communications (SMAC)
- Speech Pathology Students' Society (SPSS)
- Sri Lankan Graduates' Society (SLGS)
- St Vincent's Student Society (SVSS)
- Statistics and Mathematics Postgraduate Society (STAMPS)
- Strive Student Health Initiative Inc. (STRIVE)
- Student Conservators @ Melbourne (SC@M)
- Students in Orthopaedic and Musculoskeletal Academia (SOMA)
- Students in Primary Care Research (SPCR)
- Students in Primary Care Research Publishing Group (SPCR-P) (PD4PC)
- Students of Landscape Architecture (SOLA)
- Students of Neuropsychiatry Research (SONR)
- Students of Royal Melbourne (STORM)
- Students of the Florey Institute (SOFI)
- Surgical Students' Society of Melbourne (SSSM)
- SYNAPSE
- The Architecture Lobby - Victoria Chapter
- The Friends of Mifsud Society
- Unimelb Journalism Society (MJS)
- University of Melbourne Biotech Club (UMBC)
- University of Melbourne Infectious Disease Society (UMIDS)
- University of Melbourne Iranian Society (UMIS)
- University of Melbourne Medical Students' Society (UMMSS)
- University of Melbourne Optometry Students' Society (UMOSS)
- Victorian Environmental Law Student Network (VELSN)
- Wellbeing Arts Graduate Student Group (WAGSG)
- Western Clinical School Health Initiative Program (WCSHIP)
- Wilderness Medicine Students' Society (WMSS)
- World of Mahjong



The Navigators



# Grad Groups Expo 2023

The 2023 Grad Groups Expo was a fantastic event that was enjoyed by graduate students and GSA Club members. With a number of Grad Groups on display, students had the opportunity to discover groups they could join across a range of interests, faculties and activities. There was a successful turnout with hundreds of students dropping by to learn more about GSA, and our Grad Groups and enjoy the complementary tacos on offer.





# Business Operations





# Business Operations

With 2023 marking the full return to campus, GSA has taken significant steps to enhance the student experience by improving service deliveries to the graduate student community. In supporting GSA and its Board in delivering its objectives, the Business Operation team worked tirelessly to ensure that governance, finance, HR/OHS, and infrastructural supports are in place for all GSA initiatives, improving the service delivery and making the experience seamless for both staff and graduate students.

Underpinning this success are the dedicated efforts in finance, compliance, Grad Groups support, human resources, information technology, and facilities. Our Grad Groups team continues to drive up finance and compliance levels while improving funding deliveries to all Grad Groups.

GSA collaborated with the University and external business partners to develop high quality training programs for Elected members, students and staff. We continue drawing on the University's expertise in the areas of IT and infrastructure support safeguarding GSA from cyber and other technological security risks, while staff and students continue to enjoy high-quality IT and infrastructure service at the University.

The significant increase in GSA services to its Graduate students also creates the opportunity to realign our workforce structure to better support GSA strategic initiatives in 2024 and beyond. Overall, our team's extraordinary commitment to continuously improving processes and procedures has allowed GSA to continue providing essential services to graduate students while fostering a supportive community.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

### Grad Groups Support

- Grad Groups activities continue to grow approximately 32% in both scale and volume compared to 2022.
- GSA established a dedicated Finance and Compliance Officer to work in conjunction with the Grad Group Engagement Officer and help support Grad Groups in managing their funding and resources effectively. Funding models such as Annual Funding, Special Grants and Upfront Funding became more streamlined and improved so that funds can be administered fairly, equitably, and timely.
- The compliance function was strengthened to ensure Grad Groups met GSA's compliant requirements to receive their funding.
- Provided support to conduct Annual/Inaugural General Meetings, develop annual reports, conduct elections of office bearers, and meet all constitutional and membership obligations.
- GSA engaged an external consultant to conduct various workshops and training sessions, thus improving Grad Groups operation.
  - Certified first aid training for Grad Groups
  - Understanding your not-for-profit's constitution workshop.
- Financial reports were improved for the Finance, Risk, Audit, and Compliance Sub-Committee to manage finances appropriately and aid decision-making.

### Human resources

- To ensure that GSA strategic objectives were met while increasing student service deliveries, the GSA staffing structure was realigned to meet GSA's requirements, thus transforming challenges into opportunities.
- This strategy has stabilised our workforce and also paved the way for a forward-thinking trajectory. With a commitment to sustained growth, we will continue the focus on skill development, ensuring our team is well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to the organisation's objectives.
- Workforce realignment to better support GSA operation.
  - Improved performance, stability, culture and retention.
  - Established succession planning.
  - Worked in collaboration with our partners to deliver clear learning and development plan that included:
    - Wellbeing EAP – Assure
    - Gender diversity – Minus18
    - Risk insurance and safety – Justice Connect
    - Aboriginal cultural awareness – Koorie Heritage trust
    - Personal Development – PD Training
    - Team Building - Beyond the Boardroom
    - Employment Survey partner – Insync
    - Legal Partner – Legal Moores
    - Employee Relations advisory partner – Allens Linklaters

### Information technology

- Partnered with the University business services team for all IT support needs for GSA, ensuring high-quality IT and infrastructure support for staff and students.
- Safeguarded GSA data within the university security wall minimising any potential cybersecurity or other technological risks.
- Continuous improvement of GSA's new website as well as integration of the Grad Group portal facilitating the secure submission of information necessary for Grad Group compliance.

### OHS

GSA works in close consultation with the University Health & Safety Business Partner to ensure that we are connected and up to date with the University and other regulatory requirements. Key highlights from 2023 include:

- Attending University Health & Safety meetings
- Completion of trainings: Warden training, First aid training, online modules completion
- An OHS Management system.
- Re-establishment of the GSA OHS Committee

### Facilities

In 2023, GSA collaborated closely with the University Facilities team to accomplish the renovations of the 1888 Building. This significant project's completion enabled GSA to host student events within and around the building, ensuring a safe and inviting environment for students and staff.

GSA also worked closely with the University Facilities team on the Welcome Ground project, to ensure the safety of students. and minimise the logistical impact of Gate 8 closure to GSA operations.



# Time for Numbers





# Statement of Profit or Loss

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Student services and amenities fee (SSAF) funding - core	2,993,856	2,889,407
SSAF - other	(6,188)	-
Event income	21,876	-
Interest income	38,034	2,990
Other income	-	880
	<b>3,047,578</b>	<b>2,893,277</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation expense	16,166	12,233
Employee benefits expense	1,857,263	1,535,336
Honoraria	235,769	190,779
Other operating expenses	14,010	13,335
Program / project activity costs	654,907	396,827
Administration expenses	49,319	153,166
Audit fees	13,500	12,750
Computer / ICT expenses	38,417	85,924
Graduate groups support	245,111	182,546
Marketing and communications	55,385	54,380
	<b>3,179,847</b>	<b>2,637,276</b>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<b>(132,269)</b>	<b>256,001</b>

# Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	3,889,111	4,029,022
Prepayments		41,346	26,643
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>3,930,457</b>	<b>4,055,665</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and equipment	3	51,476	12,699
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>51,476</b>	<b>12,699</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>3,981,933</b>	<b>4,068,364</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	4	199,120	204,356
Employee benefits	5	97,114	50,295
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>296,234</b>	<b>254,651</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Employee benefits	5	4,255	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>4,255</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>300,489</b>	<b>254,651</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>3,681,444</b>	<b>3,813,713</b>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Retained surplus		3,681,444	3,813,713
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<b>3,681,444</b>	<b>3,813,713</b>



# Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

2023	Retained Earnings \$
Balance at 1 January 2023	3,813,713
Deficit for the year	(132,269)
Balance at 31 December 2023	3,681,444
2022	Retained Earnings \$
Balance at 1 January 2022	3,557,712
Surplus for the year	256,001
Balance at 31 December 2022	3,813,713

# Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Proceeds from student services and amenities fee funding	3,407,662	3,230,082
Interest received	38,034	2,990
Payments to suppliers and employees	(3,552,540)	(3,012,634)
Other receipts	21,876	880
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	6 (84,968)	221,318
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment	-	1,009
Purchase of plant and equipment	(54,943)	(2,747)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(54,943)	(1,738)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(139,911)	219,580
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	4,029,022	3,809,442
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	2 3,889,111	4,029,022



# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The financial statements cover University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc. as an individual entity. University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc. is a not-for-profit Association incorporated in Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

## Basis of Preparation

In the opinion of the Directors, the Association is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to exist users of the financial statements who are not able to command the preparation of reports tailored so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs. These special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012)* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101. *Presentation of Financial Statements*, AASB 107 *Statement of Cash Flows*, AASB 108 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* and AASB 1054 *Australian Additional Disclosures*.

## 1. Summary of significant accounting policies

### (a) Income tax

The Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

### (b) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Items of property, plant and equipment acquired for nil or nominal consideration have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

### Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the assets useful life to the Association, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

### (c) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits that are expected to be wholly settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Employee benefits expected to be settled more than one year after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements. Cashflows are discounted using market yields on high quality corporate bond rates incorporating bonds with terms to maturity that match the expected timing of cashflows. Changes in the measurement of the liability are recognised in profit or loss.

Employee benefits are presented as current liabilities in the statement of financial position if the Association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting date regardless of the classification of the liability for measurement purposed under AASB 119.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## (d) Revenue and other income

Revenue is recognised when the amount of the revenue can be measured reliably, it is probable that economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Association and where performance obligations exist, those performance obligations have been satisfied.

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is presented net of returns, discounts and rebates.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

## (e) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payable are stated inclusive of GST.

Cash flows in the statement of cash flows are included on a gross basis and the GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

## (f) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash on hand, demand deposits and short-term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

## (g) Comparative amounts

When necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to enhance comparability in respect of changes in presentation adopted in the current year.



# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 2 Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash at bank and in hand	2,355,680	2,533,625
Short-term deposits	1,533,431	1,495,397
	<u>3,889,111</u>	<u>4,029,022</u>

## 3 Property, plant and equipment

### PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Student furniture & fittings		
At cost	3,047	3,047
Accumulated depreciation	(3,047)	(2,938)
Total plant and equipment	-	109
Office fixtures & fittings		
At cost	21,265	16,779
Accumulated depreciation	(10,748)	(7,607)
Total furniture, fixtures and fittings	10,517	9,172
Office equipment & computer hardware		
At cost	127,681	77,224
Accumulated depreciation	(86,723)	(73,805)
Total computer equipment	40,958	3,419
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<u>51,475</u>	<u>12,700</u>

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 4 Trade and Other Payables

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Current		
Trade payables	21,907	34,288
Sundry payables and accrued expenses	177,213	170,068
	<u>199,120</u>	<u>204,356</u>

## 5 Employee Benefits

Current liabilities		
Annual leave	97,114	50,295
	<u>97,114</u>	<u>50,295</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Long service leave	4,255	-

## 6 Cash Flow Information

<b>Reconciliation of result for the year to cashflows from operating activities</b>		
Profit/(loss) for the year	(132,269)	256,001
Non-cash flows in profit/(loss):		
- depreciation	16,166	12,233
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
- (increase)/decrease in other assets	(14,703)	(18,208)
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(5,236)	11,562
- increase/(decrease) in employee benefits	51,074	(40,270)
Cashflows from operations	<u>(84,968)</u>	<u>221,318</u>

The Association has no significant stand-by or financing facilities in place. There were no non-cash financing or investing activities during the period.

## 7 Contingencies

In the opinion of the directors, the Association did not have any contingencies at 31 December 2023.

## 8 Economic Dependence

The Association is economically dependent on continued funding from The University of Melbourne. In 2023 Student Services and Amenities funding received from The University of Melbourne was 98.24% (2022: 99.86%) of its income.



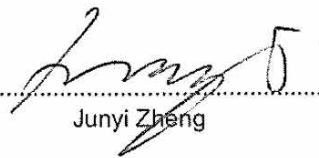
# Directors' Declaration

The responsible persons declare that in the responsible persons' opinion:

- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

President   
Jesse Gardner-Russell

Treasurer   
Junyi Zheng

Dated 05 April 2024

# Independent Audit Report to the Members of University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc.

## Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023, the statement of profit or loss, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2023 is prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 31 December 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Emphasis of matter - Basis of accounting

We draw attention to Note of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Association to fulfil the financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the Association and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the Association. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.



Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report


- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association’s internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial reporter, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the management with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.

From the matters communicated with the management, we determine those matters that were of most significance in the audit of the financial report of the current period and are therefore the key audit matters. We describe these matters in our auditor’s report unless law or regulation precludes public disclosure about the matter or when, in extremely rare circumstances, we determine that a matter should not be communicated in our report because the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.

  
ACCRU MELBOURNE (AUDIT) PTY LTD

  
C J FLYNN

05 April 2024

Report on expenditure under the Student Services and Amenities Fee Funding Agreement 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding allocation			
Annual amount received	1	2,993,856	2,889,407
Total SSAF funding allocation under the SSAF agreement		2,993,856	2,889,407
Less operating expenditure			
Policy & Advocacy and education activities	2	2,413,683	1,919,695
Administrative services to support	3	505,875	516,514
Sub-total operating expenditure		2,919,558	2,436,209
Less funding made available to other bodies			
Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Inc		-	-
Other affiliation fees - NATSIPA		13,000	-
Graduate groups	4	242,561	182,546
Sub-total funding to other bodies		255,561	182,546
Total expenditure		3,175,119	2,618,755
SSAF Funding monies unspent / (overspent)	5	(181,263)	270,652
Costs covered by 2023 non-SSAF Funding	6	48,993	

Notes

- Represents core funding allocation received under the SSAF funding agreement 2023-2025. GSA didn’t receive any other grant funding from the University of Melbourne from separate SSAF funding pools in 2023.
- In line with GSA’s aim to provide more support to graduate students activities, GSA has increased its spending on policy, advocacy & education support areas.
- GSA’s aim is to reduce/maintain its total admin costs at a low/acceptable level to that of prior year. The focus is more on service delivery to graduate students as GSA expands its on-campus & cross-campus operations.
- Represents 8.1% of SSAF funding received for the year. Up from 6.2% in 2022 GSA is committed to provide additional resources to grad groups fostering growth, enhancing collaboration, and enriching graduate students’ community experience.
- GSA had overspent monies in 2023 resulting from increasing service delivery to students both on-campus, cross-campus as well as online. The overspent amount is financed via the reserves as GSA aims to strategically spend down its reserves as per SSAF negotiations.
- During the course of 2023, GSA generates \$48,993 in non-SSAF funding. This fund was used to offset part of the GSA expenditure.



# Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)

Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)  
Reporting template - 2023 Actual GSA

Reporting Category	2023 Actual \$ Core SSAF Funding	2023 - Actual \$ Other sources of funding	TOTAL Actual for 2023
1.0 Advocacy and Representation	383,464		383,464
2.0 Careers Advice and Support	205,797		205,797
3.0 Creative Arts and Media	218,465		218,465
4.0 Physical and Administrative Infrastructure	505,874		505,874
5.0 Recreation, Fitness and Sport	291,421		291,421
6.0 Skills for Study	151,353		151,353
7.0 Social Connectedness & Participation	772,760		772,760
8.0 Student Support and Welfare	645,984		645,984
Total Expenditure	3,175,118	-	3,175,118
Total SSAF Funding	2,993,856	48,993	3,042,848
SSAF Funding monies unspent / (overspent)	(181,263)	48,993	(132,270)

# Statement by President and Treasurer

Report on expenditure under the Student Services and Amenities Fee  
Funding Agreement 2023

We, Jesse Gardner-Russell and Junyi Zheng, being the President and Treasurer of the University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc., state the accompanying report has been prepared in accordance with the Student Services and Amenities Fee Funding Agreement 2023 and that all moneys spent for the year ended 31 December 2023 and disclosed herein have been on providing facilities, services or activities of direct benefit to graduate students at the University of Melbourne.

President .....  
Jesse Gardner-Russell

Treasurer .....  
Junyi Zheng

Dated 8 April 2024



# Independent Audit Report

To the University of Melbourne

**Report on the Acquittal Report**

The attached acquittal report for the year ended 31 December 2023 of University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc., has been prepared using the accruals basis of accounting for the purpose of acquitting expenditure under the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Funding Agreement 2023.

**Executive Committee Responsibility**

The executive committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the report and the information contained therein. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the report that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances..

**Auditor’s responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the report is free from material misstatement. The accounting books and records of University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc. have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the statutory financial report for the year ended 31 December 2023.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the report. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the report.

The report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the executive committee’s financial reporting requirements under the Funding Agreement. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on these report to which it relates to any person other than the directors, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis of our audit opinion.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

**Auditor’s opinion**

In our opinion the attached special purpose report for the year ended 31 December 2023 has been drawn up in accordance with the books and records of University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc. so as to give a true and fair view of the Income totalling \$2,993,856, and Expenditure totalling \$3,175,119 for the Student Services and Amenities Fee Funding Agreement (2023) for University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association Inc.

*Accru Melbourne*

ACCRU MELBOURNE (AUDIT) PTY LTD

*Cameron J Flynn*

C J FLYNN  
Director

Dated 8 April 2024



**GSA would like to  
acknowledge and thank the  
University of Melbourne for  
their support and funding  
over the past year.**



# Contact us

## Call us

**Our free hotline**

1800-GSA-HELP (1800-472-435)

**Our reception desk**

(03) 8344 8657

## Find us

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Parkville, Victoria 3010

## Email us

[info@gsa.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:info@gsa.unimelb.edu.au)

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